

YEC ATTENDANCE ON INCREASE



Bethany Barr Phillips, Christian vocalist from Tuscaloosa, Al., and her band perform at the 2013 Youth Evangelism Challenge (YEC) at A.E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton. Don Lum, director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson and YEC coordinator, said 1,200 young people and their chaperones attended the annual event, a rise of about 100 attendees over the previous year's total. The Youth Evangelism Challenge is supported by admission fees and the Mississippi Cooperative Program. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

American Christian languishes in North Korean labor camp

PYONGYANG, North Korea (BP) — The American citizen imprisoned in North Korea and paraded before cameras last week to plead for his release is a devout Christian, according to a family-run website advocating for his release.

Kenneth Bae, 44, of Lynwood, Wa., was sentenced to 15 years in a North Korean labor camp for a "crime against the state." He has been imprisoned for more than 14 months, longer than any American has been detained in North Korea.

"Several years ago, Kenneth saw an opportunity that combined his entrepreneurial spirit with his personal convictions as a Christian," the website, freenow.com, states. "He believed in showing compassion to the North Korean people by contributing to their economy in the form of tourism."



KENNETH BAE

As the website advocating for his freedom explains, Bae started a tour company based in China in 2006 and regularly led groups to North Korea, "a remote country filled with stunning vistas and a people proud of their history and tradition."

Bae, who was born in South Korea lived there until the age of 18 when he emigrated to the U.S. with his family, was arrested in November 2012 as he was leading a tour group in one of North Korea's special economic zones for foreign investors.

"His livelihood was to introduce the natural beauty of the country and its people to the outside world as a tour operator. His heart was to be a personal touch-point of compassionate humanity to the North Korean people," the website states.

In comments to Baptist Press (BP) on Jan. 14, Bae's sister Terri Chung said a friend who had gone on one of Bae's tours described him as "an ambassador of peace and light in the world."

see BAE on p. 6

Pastors double attendance at prayer meeting

ATLANTA (BP) — Twice as many pastors gathered for two days of focused prayer in Atlanta compared to the first such meeting last fall in Dallas, prompting the gathering's organizer, Ronnie Floyd, to say, "God is up to something special in America."

"As I leave our prayer gathering, I am convinced more than ever that the Lord is stirring up men of God all across this nation," Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, wrote in a blog post.

Floyd was greatly encouraged by the turnout for "A Call to Pray for Revival and Awakening." Nearly 400 pastors and other ministers praying together Jan. 13-14 at the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel.

Last fall's gathering was primarily for senior pastors, but the latest meeting was open to a broader group. The men were from 180 churches in 28 states as well as various Southern Baptist entities, state conventions, and other ministries.

"The only answer in the church and in our nation is a major move of God, and He is placing a strong burden and growing desperation in our midst," Floyd said. "While I saw this in our Dallas gathering in the fall, God intensified it in Atlanta this week. This is occurring because of extraordinary prayer."

Alvin Reid, professor of evangelism and student ministry at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., said he went to the gathering not because he exemplifies a great man of prayer "but because I know I am weak, and I need the prayers of my brothers."

"It blessed me to be at a gathering where we spent more time praying than anything else," Reid wrote on his blog Jan. 15. "It has been years since I have done this, and I desperately needed it."

Before each lengthy time of prayer, the men received a short challenge from Floyd and others.

Jack Graham, pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas, and former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said he was grateful for pastor friends who prayed in faith.

"We met together to seek God and encourage one another in fellowship and believing prayer," Graham wrote in a statement to Baptist Press. "Only one agenda: to ask God to rekindle our love for Jesus, revive His church and enable us to fulfill His mission on earth to make disciples. The presence of God was real and ignited our hearts as one."

"I'm confident we are better men and more effective servants of Christ because we gathered in His Great Name and for His Glory (Ephesians 3:20-21)."

Floyd said pastors and ministers at the Atlanta Meeting were "lying on their faces in humility, pouring out their prayers not just for others but for their own spiritual condition." He said he saw

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

The party is on

January 22 brought the annual observance of a most shameful day, celebrated as always with the prideful arrogance of evildoers across the country.

"Around the nation, we will be celebrating the 41st anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Join us in honoring the fundamental American values of freedom and privacy that this landmark Supreme Court decision giving women the right to access abortion represents," said the NARAL/Pro-Choice America website prior to the observance of the legalization of infanticide through all nine months of pregnancy.

NARAL/Pro-Choice America even includes an interactive map of the United States where pro-abortion groups can list their local events and supporters can locate an event near them.

The Keystone franchise of Planned Parenthood in Trexler-town, Pa., held a happy hour at a local bar so they could hoist a toast to the destruction of over 55 million human beings.

"Every woman has the right to have the children she wants, raise the children she has, plan her own family and make her own health care decisions. That means women must have the social, economic and political power to pursue their goals. We will not rest until that is a reality for all women, in all communities," reported the National Organization for Women, in a rambling and rather pointless manifesto on their web site.

One supposes 41 years of rampant killing must have dulled the senses of some people and caused others to suspend reality. The damage done to our republic has been incalculable.

"I find nothing in the language or history of the Constitution to support the Court's judgment," wrote Justice Byron White at the time, one of only two justices to oppose the *Roe v. Wade* decision. "The Court simply fashions and announces a new constitutional right for pregnant mothers and, with scarcely any reason or authority for its action, invests that right with sufficient substance to override most existing state abortion statutes."

Even the anonymous Jane Roe, around whom the *Roe v. Wade* lawsuit was styled, has renounced her role in the whole sordid affair so profoundly that she has allowed herself to be identified by her real name. Norma McCorvey, who has become a Christian, wants nothing more to do with this moral, spiritual, and constitutional travesty.

"It was my pseudonym, Jane Roe, which had been used to create the 'right' to abortion out of legal thin air. But Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffey [her attorneys] never told me what I was signing would allow women to come up to me 15, 20 years later and say, 'Thank you for allowing me to have my five or six abortions. Without you, it wouldn't have been possible,'" McCorvey has said.

Thus we have multiple generations of American young people who understand, quite clearly, that they have no intrinsic value, that they could have been killed at any time prior to their birth because they are, simply, expendable. Why, then, are we astonished at the breathtaking rate of suicide among young people? We have demonstrated for 41 years that our children are of no worth to us.

Thus we have multiple generations of predatory men who take advantage of vulnerable young girls (and adult women who should know better), saddling these women with a lifetime of abortion guilt just so they don't have to live up to their responsibilities and obligations.

Thus we have multiple generations of devastated fathers, who were given no say in the destruction of their progeny. Sadly, the same is also true for untold numbers of grandparents.

This is the place to whence we have arrived as a country. Dancing on the corpses of defenseless babies. Happy hour for ridding ourselves of the little human pests. Defense of the indefensible. Glee over the death of innocents.

Happy anniversary, America. May we receive what we so richly deserve.

Speak out for the children

When I was a child growing up in a Southern Baptist church in south Mississippi, we used to sing a lot of songs in Sunday School assembly. One song had the line: "And if the devil doesn't like it, he can sit on a tack."

As the years have gone by, I've realized there are a lot of things the devil doesn't like, in fact a lot of things the Scripture says the devil rages against. One of those things is the sound of children singing. "Out of the mouths of babes," Jesus says, quoting the Psalms, "Your praise will come."

As Jesus tells us, those who become as little children are those who will inherit the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18:2-3). Satan sees the picture of his own defeat in those children's faces.

That's why in every era we have to stand vigilant against a culture of death and stand up for a culture of life. One of the things to which we should commit ourselves is to work toward the day when not only, as one leader put it years ago, abortion will be illegal — although we should work for that — but also when abortion is unthinkable!

We should be standing up to protect the lives of children in law. We should be working in our voting, in our legislative process, to protect the lives of children. We also need to be working within our congregations to teach and remind ourselves that there is no such thing as a wasted human life.

There is no person who is less than a person. Everyone, including the unborn, is created in the image of God and, therefore, bears all of the rights of life and of liberty. Let's stand up for the unborn. Let's stand up for women who are being harmed and hurt by the abortion industry and by predatory men who pressure them into abortions.

Let's speak to those who have had abortions in order to say that, although this is an awful and unspeakable sin against God, the blood of Christ cleanses all sin from every conscience that cries out to Him in repentance and faith.

■ Always speak with kindness and grace. Be careful to maintain a Christian testimony when engaging others, even when you disagree with one another.

■ Establish a local crisis center. Check Care Net (care-net.org) and find a center nearby where you can volunteer. See if your church can help partner to raise money for the center. If there isn't one in your area,



Guest opinion

with Russell D. Moore

prayerfully consider spearheading an effort to start one.

You might begin by speaking with the leaders in your local church or with prolife organizations such as The Psalm 139 Project (psalm139project.org).

■ Establish an outreach to young, single moms at your church. Young moms need support and are often very open to parenting help. Consider launching a Teen Mothers of Preschoolers chapter (mops.org/teen).

■ Support education efforts. Consider supporting organizations that offer smart, compassionate efforts to educate the public on the issue of abortion, such as the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (erlc.com).

■ Support local legislative efforts. The real momentum in codifying protections for the unborn into law seems to be on the state level. Organizations like The National Right to Life Federation or local Right to Life groups are great resources to follow on pending legislation.

■ Pray. Pray for the women and girls who are considering abortion, that they will choose life. Pray for the millions who are living with the trauma of having chosen abortion in the past. Pray for the staff of pregnancy care centers as they minister to everyone who walks through their doors.

"We preach the Gospel. We stand for justice. We fight the devil, recognizing that every time we preach the Gospel, every time we seek to protect children, we're saying what many of us once sang: 'Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world.'"

Bilal native Moore is president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Nashville. For Sanctity of Human Life resources and to download a 3-minute video suitable for use in church worship services, visit <http://erlc.com/life>.

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SAVING BABIES — Brian Fisher (right), co-founder of Online For Life (OFL), and Tim Gerwing, OFL vice president of technology, discuss demographics in their office in Frisco, Texas. (BP photo courtesy of Southern Baptist TEXAN.)

App aims to steer women to crisis pregnancy centers

GRAPEVINE, Texas (BP) — "OnlineForLife: Center TX02 is speaking with someone considering abortion. Will you pray?" The notification pops up on an iPhone and "Yes" is tapped, adding another intercessor in behalf of an unknown woman seeking counsel at an unknown Texas crisis pregnancy center.

That the woman was even speaking with a life-affirming counselor can be credited to a simple yet underutilized tool in the pro-life movement: marketing.

Attracting women to a crisis pregnancy centers (CPC) often requires a personal touch. A woman facing a difficult pregnancy may confide in a friend or family member. The prayers of a sidewalk counselor may be the last words a woman hears before entering an abortion clinic.

What if there was a way to direct a woman to a CPC before she leaves her home, and simultaneously rally a national network of partners to pray for her?

"We're business guys, and we test things so we can maximize the number of babies we save," said Brian Fisher, co-founder of Online For Life (OFL), a pro-life nonprofit business.

Drawing on the expertise of professionals in the business and technology industries, OFL has developed cutting-edge online marketing techniques to direct abortion-minded women to CPCs and their life-affirming message.

That work is then undergirded in prayer. The OFL iPhone application asks followers to pray. Being able to pray in real time for a woman considering abortion has powerful potential, Fisher said.

Mustering the prayers of many thousands of people across the nation on behalf of abortion-minded women and

their families could be a culture-changer. "When you have that many people interceding, you're going to have babies saved," Fisher said.

Fisher admitted the "abortion holocaust" was not on his radar in the 1990s, but the friendship of a CPC director in Pittsburgh and the birth of his first son in 1999 began an eight-year journey leading to involvement in the pro-life movement.

In 2007, Fisher and a co-worker at Coral Ridge Ministries in Florida toyed with the idea of using the Internet and social media to direct women from abortion clinics to CPCs. It worked.

Fisher took the prototype to Dallas in 2009 and launched Online For Life. On June 21, 2010, the first OFL baby was rescued. That reality crashed over Fisher in a wave of gratitude to God.

All of the hard work and dedication wrought a priceless reward — the life of a baby rescued and a mother saved from the heartache of abortion.

"That's our baby," declared Lori Szala, executive director of Pregnancy Resource Center South Hills in Pittsburgh. One of three CPCs involved in the 2007 test project, the Pittsburgh center became the first CPC in the nation to affiliate with Online For Life and the partnership has proven invaluable.

Szala said nonprofit centers like hers cannot compete with government-subsidized abortion giant Planned Parenthood and for-profit abortion clinics in the Internet marketing arena, but OFL gives them an edge.

For a monthly fee, the Pittsburgh center partners with OFL to get the clinic's foot in the marketing door. That has translated into a 75% increase in inquiries from abortion-minded women, Szala reported.

Surveys: Racial diversity in church important, but difficult to achieve

NASHVILLE (BP) — Having a racially diverse church remains more dream than reality for most Protestant pastors.

Eighty-five percent of them say every church should strive for racial diversity, according to a survey from LifeWay Research, but eighty-six percent say their congregation is predominately one racial or ethnic group.

Diverse churches remain rare today, says Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, partly because of human nature. "Everybody wants diversity, but many don't want to be around people who are different."

The research study also found 91% of pastors say "churches should reflect the racial diversity in their community," and 79% believe their congregations look similar to the people in their neighborhood.

Mark DeYmaz, pastor of Mosaic Church, a multiethnic church in central Arkansas, is skeptical. DeYmaz, who also helped found the Mosaic network of multiethnic churches, says pastors aren't always aware of how diverse their communities have become.

"Pastors would do well to look into the diversity of nearby public schools and gauge this against the diversity of their church to really understand their context. They might, too, spend one hour sitting at the front of the nearby Walmart or other local grocery to see if in fact their church reflects the community."

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows America is becoming increasingly diverse. About 17% of Americans identify as Hispanic. African Americans make up 13% of the population, followed by Asian Americans at five percent, and Native American or Native Alaskan at one percent. Another 2.4 percent identify with more than one racial group.

Non-Hispanic whites make up 63% of the population. That number drops to about 49% for children under five years old, according to a recent report from the Associated Press.

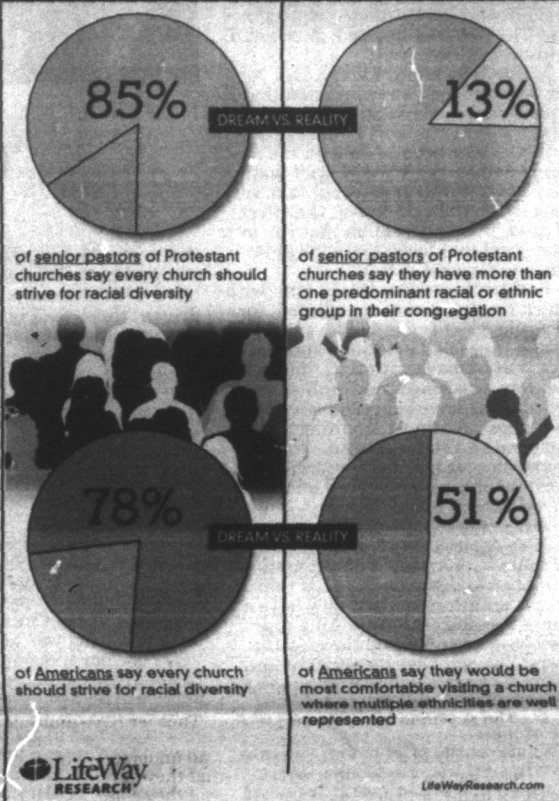
DeYmaz sees the widespread support for the idea of diversity in the LifeWay Research poll as a good sign. "We have gained tremendous ground over the past 10 years or so."

He says a decade ago the first meeting of the Mosaic network drew about 30 people. A similar meeting last November drew more than 1,000.

He says pastors are more aware of the need for diversity in churches. In the past, DeYmaz and other leaders in multiethnic churches spent much of their time trying to convince other pastors about the need for diversity. Now they spend more time talking with pastors about strategies for creating diverse churches, DeYmaz says.

"Increasingly, their question

Racial diversity in church



is not, 'Why should I?' but, 'How can I?'

Derwin Gray, pastor of Transformation Church, a multiethnic congregation in Indian Land, S.C., says if pastors want diverse congregations, they need to change their sermons. He worries pastors support diversity for pragmatic rather than theological reasons.

Gray says the early Christian churches were racially diverse, but that idea was lost as churches divided along racial and ethnic lines. He wants pastors to go back to the Bible to discover why churches should be diverse.

"We shouldn't long for racial diversity. We should long for the proclamation of Jesus, which creates ethnic diversity. The Apostle Paul didn't start one church for Jews and one church for Gentiles in the New Testament. The Gospel brought people together."

More focus on racial diversity in church could find a welcome audience. A second LifeWay Research survey, this time an online panel of 1,036 Americans, found that 78% say "every church should strive for racial diversity."

Fifty-one percent say they would be most comfortable visiting a church where multiple ethnicities were well represented. Three-quarters also say churches

should reflect the diversity of their communities.

There are some signs the number of diverse churches in the United States is growing. A 2010 Faith Communities Today survey, which included 11,000 congregations of different faiths, found that about 12.5% of Protestant churches were multiethnic when defined as no single ethnic group comprising more 80% of the congregation.

DeYmaz says moving diversity from a dream to a reality will take hard work. "Wishful thinking in this regard will not bring increasing diversity to local churches for the sake of the Gospel."

Methodology: The telephone survey of Protestant pastors was conducted in Sept. 4-19, 2013. The calling list was randomly drawn from a stratified list of Protestant churches.

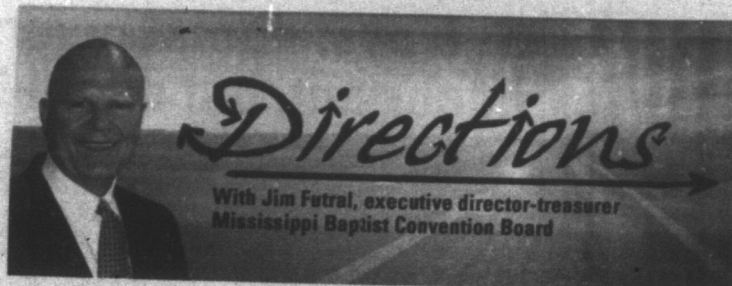
Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister, or priest of the church contacted. Responses were weighted to reflect the geographic distribution and denominational groups of Protestant churches. The completed sample is 1,007 phone interviews and provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed +3.1%. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

Recently, I was in a meeting with a group of folks and while the substance of the meeting had not gotten underway, suddenly one of the folks in attendance just loudly exclaimed, "Good grief!" Quickly, it was apparent what the problem was for the person. It had to do with something that a fellow worker was supposed to do for the meeting and had not carried out their responsibility. The person was just exasperated and said, "Good grief!"

While they knew, I knew, and you know that is just an expression that is sometimes used to announce that all is not well in our world, the expression has very little to do with the ongoing daily experience of grief that we may have. While it does not take very long in life to begin to feel the effects of grief, it is very seldom that you ever have grief that feels, looks, or pretends to be good.

Bad grief seems to be the kind with which most of us are acquainted, for as a rule, grief is simply the stimulation of those bad emotions and feelings that we have within us. Most of the time, it is associated with some loss that we have experienced. It can be the loss of almost anything which can create a grief response. We do not think of it that way, but it is true. It can be the loss of a loved one or a friend. It can be the loss of your job or it can be the loss of self-esteem over an experience at your job. It can be the loss of a game or a promotion. It is hard to describe the grief that people go through when they have a house fire and lose everything that they have accumulated through the years. You can have an accident and severely damage your car and though you are alright, you will experience the grief that comes with the loss of a pile of metal.

Whatever the grief is that you may have in your life, oftentimes it just hangs on and sometimes it seems as though it will never leave. The tragic loss of a child, the painful process of a bitter divorce, the sinister acts



Good Grief

that took place in a termination of a job, and many other events in life are laced with bitterness. It is hard to discard those feelings, to pull yourself together and to move forward. While we may say, "Good grief," it is rarely good at all.

It seems to me that most of the time, it is just bad to the core. Why? Well, for one reason it is in a sense an unending grief because it is woven into our memory bank. The deeper the hurt and the more vivid the loss the more profound and maybe long-term is the grief. You can see that clearly in our national memory bank. It is hard to find someone who was alive at the time who doesn't recall where they were and what was taking place when Pearl Harbor was bombed, President Kennedy was shot, 9/11 took place or Katrina struck our coastline. You cannot simply walk away from the deep moments of grief in your life because there are too many pieces of life that surround it that are hurting.

Another reality about grief is that it is unpredictable. What I mean by that is that you do not know when grief is going to re-enter your

thought process and your feelings. Sometimes it seems as though you are getting everything back together and it is just a faint memory because you have moved on in your life. But suddenly with no warning at all a tsunami of grief components arrive at your heart's door and stop you in your tracks. You thought you were getting better and you were, but grief has its own timetable, its own behavior patterns, and its own shock system. Whether you like it or not and you probably will not, you have to deal with what comes.

That brings me to a third thing about grief and that is it is unmanageable. It is bad enough just having grief, but the fact that you cannot manage it makes it even worse. It comes, stirs up more pain and seems to hang around in its own will.

So what in the world are we supposed to do? Well, allow me to introduce you to our living Savior, Jesus Christ. He understands our grief dilemma. In fact, the scripture says, "He is a man of sorrows; and acquainted with grief," (Isa. 53:3). He knows what the initial trauma and the ongoing wrestling with the pain and

problems of grief feels like. Simply to know that somebody understands what you are going through is a source of encouragement.

Jesus certainly knows what you and I are feeling. The writer of Hebrews tells us that, "We do not have a high priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He wrestled with our problems, and He knows what you are going through today. He is not just a Savior that feels our pain. He can come alongside of us, strengthen us, lift us up and empower us to go on even through our moments of grief. That is the remarkable thing about Jesus.

He told His own disciples that He was going away, but that He would not leave them without a comforter. He would send one who would be just like Him and would always be alongside of them. The Greek word the Bible uses is paraclete. He was talking about the ever present Holy Spirit who so lovingly and gently puts His strong arms around us, lifts us up and so powerfully enables us to continue. So many people have told me through the years of a moment in time when it just seemed like they did not think that they would be able to get up and face the situation, or go through the next day, or make a decision that was so charged with memories and emotions. But suddenly the strength of heaven was theirs. The grief, though present and clear, could not control the totality of their life. The Lord saw them through the moment.

He is available to me, and you can mark it down that He is available to you. Trust Him! While you may not see grief as good, you will find that God is good in the midst of your grief. When He shows up and lifts you up, you can pause and quietly say, "Good grief!" It really will be an experience with God.

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OGVH NCXYD: TCTN

Clue: G = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 10:45

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing: no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 23, 2014

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

Pray this day for...

January 24 – February 6, 2014

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
— Ephesians 6:18

Pray for: **Aaron & Tiffany Epps**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert & Margaret Fortenberry**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Gloria Glaze**, missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples through media consultation & media promotion.

Pray for: **Clarence Frank Harrison & Phoebe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for: **Kenneth & Kimberly Hathcock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Bonnie Hearon**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Earl & Ramona Hewitt**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through medicine, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Raymond & Cynthia Hodgins**, missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples through sports evangelism, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Jeffrey & Liesa Holman**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Janey Holloway**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Ronald & Beverly Holmes**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Patricia Holyfield**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

HEALTH CONFERENCE



February 28, 2014

6-8:45 PM

FBC, Jackson

Featured Speaker: **Joni Eareckson Tada**

Joni Eareckson Tada, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Joni and Friends International Disability Center, is an international advocate for people with disabilities. A diving accident in 1967 left Joni Eareckson, then 17, a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, without the use of her hands. After two years of rehabilitation, she emerged with new skills and a fresh determination to help others in similar situations. In 2000, Joni wrote her memoir "The God I Love," chronicling her life walking with Jesus. Her latest book, "A Place of Healing," recounts her recent journey through physical pain and questions concerning prayer for healing.

Prelude Music	Organist/Pianist
6:00-6:05 p.m.	Dr. L. Laron Gray
6:05-6:15 p.m. Theme: Interpretation/Introductions	FBC, Jackson
6:15-6:45 p.m.	Dr. Steve Stone
Spiritual/Intellectual Health	MS Baptist Convention Board
6:45-7:15 p.m.	Dr. Jim Futral
Physical Health / DVD	MS Baptist Convention Board
7:15-7:30 p.m.	Dr. Brenda Sullivan
7:30-7:35 p.m.	Baptist Health Systems
7:35-8:45 p.m.	BREAK
Featured Speaker	Dr. L. Laron Gray
	FBC, Jackson
	Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni & Friends

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:
Church Growth Dept., Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205
E-mail: sbell@mbcb.org
Phone: 601-292-3310 • FAX: 601-714-7424

Church Building Conference

MARCH 18, 2014

BAPTIST BUILDING, SKYROOM

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: **Steven D. Newmon**, LifeWay Architecture

For more information contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. of the MBCB at 601-292-3305.

Church Music conference

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST

February 6-7, 2014

Feb. 6, 12 p.m. - Feb. 7, 9 p.m.

First Baptist Church, Vicksburg

For more information contact the Church Music Dept. of the MBCB at 601-292-2267.

The following is a listing of contributions made to the Lord's work which were received by the business office of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2013. An asterisk denotes a gift from the association. If you have any questions about the amounts reported for your church, please contact the business office at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651. Thank you.

The following is a listing of co. churches made to the Lord's work which were received by the Christian Church in the United States from January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011. An "M" denotes a new church organization. If you are a member of a church not listed, please report for your church, please contact the business office at 601-568-3800 or 1-800-748-1851. Thank you.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Common Core and its failed promise

Education is fundamental to the development of a child's mind. Children are most formative in their early years and is why the Bible places so much emphasis on instructing children (Deuteronomy 6:6 and Ephesians 6:4). Based on Scriptural authority Christians have placed strong emphasis on education through small group study and Sunday school.

Education since pre-modern times has shifted to public school. Also, education has been locally controlled until recently. Families have benefited from legal rights over local control of education. With the implementation of Common Core much has changed. These standards have set forth a radical change in education of what students are expected to learn and when. There are two fundamental problems with Common Core: the surrender of local control and the failed promise of higher standards.

Common Core Standards are controlled and directed from Washington, D.C.

In 2010, with the possibility of federal dollars being dangled in front of it, Mississippi adopted the Common Core State Standards for K-12. Common Core promised to be rigorous, evidence-based, and internationally benchmarked to high performing countries.

At the request of the Mississippi Board of Education, Common Core was approved by Gov. Haley Barbour in the Race to the Top application. Gov. Barbour signed this application that included the Standards that were not even finished. This in turn unconditionally bound Mississippi to Washington, D.C. control and manipulation. Congressional supporters were Congressmen Bennie Thompson and Congressmen Thad Cochran as they signed letters of support of this educational agenda that included the Common Core Standards.

These Standards are owned by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), both in Washington, D.C. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) that will be assessing students under Common Core is also a Washington, D.C. entity. PARCC is also funded and overseen by the federal government. These Washington, D.C. entities are not accountable to the people of Mississippi.

David Coleman, primary author of Common Core said,

Year: 2009-2010 (pre Common Core)			Year: 2011-2012 (Common Core)		
Subject	Number Tested	% Passing	Subject	Number Tested	% Passing
Algebra	364	93.1	Algebra	476	56.5
Biology	325	88.6	Biology	689	66.0
English	376	75.0	English	408	73.8
U.S. History	332	98.8	U.S. History	336	81.0

Figure 1: Gulfport School District: Subject Area Testing Program

Source: Mississippi Department of Education

"The standards are nothing if the assessments built in them are not worthy to teach to. ... Teachers will teach towards the test. There is no force strong enough on this earth to prevent that." So, if the learning goals are necessarily connected to the assessment, then what connects the two? The curriculum. This federal hand in glove approach to education, over and beyond Mississippi control, drives the curriculum to be "aligned" to Common Core.

Much to the chagrin of what mainstream media and leading Mississippi Republicans and Democrats say, Mississippi education is in the hands of entities in Washington, D.C. Only read the Common Core Standards "Terms of Use" to realize the extent these Washington, D.C. entities have gone to keep a firm grip on Common Core. The "Terms of Use" state that "A court of competent jurisdiction in Washington, DC shall be the exclusive forum for the resolution of any dispute between you (Mississippi) and NGA Center or CCSSO, and you irrevocably consent to the personal and subject matter jurisdiction, and venue, of such court" (emphasis added).

Supporters of the Standards say the federal government was not involved in the Common Core initiative, but David Axelrod, President Obama's former Senior Advisor, said that these standards were "the Common Core Standards which was an initiative of the Obama Administration." This is a significant admission that Republicans and Democrats are glossing over. They are echoing a message that is all too similar to what Pres. Obama said, "If you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan." In the words of George Will, supporters of Common Core say, "If you like your local control of education, you can keep it. Period." To which a burgeoning movement is responding: "No. Period."

Common Core Standards failed its promise.

Gulfport School District was a pilot test school for the implementation of Common Core English, Language, Arts and Math for the 2011-2012 school year. Figure 1 compares Gulfport District scores from the Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) before and after the implementation of Common Core Standards. Passing the SATP test is required to graduate. If they fail the SATP, they don't graduate. Scores are lower across the board after the implementation of Common Core. There is a significant drop in the Algebra score from 93.1 to 56.5 and in Biology from 88.6 to 66.0. In the 2012-2013 year there was no SATP testing and as a result the Mississippi Department of Education has placed Gulfport School District on academic probation.

Despite these abysmal test scores, Senate Education Chairman Gray Tollison said "I hope we all stick together, because at the end of the day there is a tremendous benefit for the state and for students to raising the achievement level." The evidence certainly points the other direction, toward the Race to the Bottom.

Why was there no SATP test given in the 2012-2013 year? Did students who failed the SATP from other districts not graduate while those who would have failed at the Gulfport District School passed? How is this fair? Are those who failed held to a higher standard than those from Gulfport District School? These are real problems and is why the MS Department of Education and Education Committee Chairmen Sen. Gray Tollison (Lafayette, Tallahatchie, Yalobusha) and Rep. John Moore (Rankin and Simpson) need to address it.

MS politicians and educators and businesses repeatedly emphasize the need for more high school graduates to be prepared for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) studies. But the Com-

mon Core fails the promise to prepare students for STEM.

President Obama, quoted in the Race to the Top application, said "Reaffirming and strengthening America's role as the world's engine of scientific discovery and technological innovation is essential to meeting the challenges of this century." In the section of the application emphasizing STEM it stated, "Equally important is the need to support and promote the STEM majors and careers for the reasons expressed in the President's statement above—it literally is a matter of national security and Mississippi has the chance to do its part." So, according to the MS Board of Education, STEM education and careers are a "matter of national security." But Common Core failed its promise to deliver on STEM.

Common Core Math Standards elaborate on this problem stating that "Research consistently finds that taking mathematics above the Algebra II level highly corresponds to many measures of student success....Of students taking (Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II and no other mathematics courses), only thirteen percent of those students met the benchmark for readiness for college algebra....(Common Core Math only goes up to Algebra II)....STEM-intending students should be strongly encouraged to take Precalculus and Calculus."

Dr. Zimba, the lead writer of the Common Core Math Standards, has admitted Common Core's deficiencies in this regard; in defining "college readiness," Zimba acknowledged that Common Core is "not only not for STEM, it's also not for selective colleges."

PARCC states that students who graduate under Common Core math standards "must progress well beyond the initial threshold of college and career readiness as defined by the (Common Core) standards" if they "wish to pursue science, technology, engineering or mathematics (S.T.E.M.) majors in college."

Dr. Bud Peterson, the president of Georgia Tech stated that "for admission to a 'technology based' college program, algebra needs to be taught in 8th grade so that the students can have some exposure to calculus before entering college." Common Core teaches Algebra I in the 9th.

Math standards expert Ze'ev Wurman said "When children are not prepared to take algebra I at the start of eighth grade, they have to accelerate three years of math into two years in order to be prepared for calculus by twelfth grade. As is, the Common Core does not include even pre-calculus expectations. This makes for a significant disadvantage to children from economically disadvantaged communities because they cannot afford the private tutoring and private courses to help them negotiate the accelerated learning."

So, why are we in the Common Core? Perhaps MS elected leaders and school superintendents signed onto the promise of the Common Core, that few people stopped to study whether the eventual product met that promise....or perhaps they had painted themselves into a corner, politically-speaking, and now think it would make them look bad to admit the truth.

But the future of our children is at stake. We need politicians of virtue to push for legislative change this session. Education Chairmen Sen. Tollison and Rep. Moore alone have the power to set the agenda in their committee to bring bills up that address Common Core by Feb. 4. Also, Lt. Gov. Reeves and House Speaker Gunn also are in positions of great influence. If these bills do not come up in their committee, then it will be because they refused to resolve this. Call Rep. John Moore 601-359-3330 Capitol, 601-591-4100 (W), 601-946-5833 (C) and Sen. Gray Tollison 601-359-2395 Capitol, 662-234-7070, (W). MS Capitol number is 601-359-3770. Tell these Chairmen and your legislators not to hold hostage the opportunity to create higher standards for our children and bring these bills out of committee by February 4. Text CORE to 95577 for text alerts and go to <https://votervoice.net/CAC/Campaigns> to sign up for legislative updates.

The author of this analysis, Rob Chambers, serves as consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or rchambers@christianaction.com.

BAE

cont. from p. 1

"That captures what Kenneth was trying to do in North Korea," Chung told BP. "He had the biggest heart for the people and the nation of North Korea, and he wanted to show tourists from Europe, Canada and the United States a different side to the country than what we typically see in the western media in the hopes of bridging the cultural divide."

When he was arrested, Bae was on at least his 15th such trip. CNN reported Jan. 13 that North Korea accused him of planning to bring down the government through religious activities.

CNN reported earlier that the state-run Korean Central News Agency claimed Bae was setting up bases in China to topple the North Korean government, was encouraging North Korean citizens to bring down the government, and was conducting a "malignant smear campaign."

According to CNN, some observers have speculated that the evidence North Korea cites against Bae may be something he was carrying with him when he was arrested, such as a Bible or other religious literature.

Bae is married with three children. His son Jonathan has written a petition to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, U.S. President Barack Obama, and the U.S. Congress, asking them to secure special amnesty for his father.

More than 150,000 people have signed the petition, which is accessible at change.org/FreeKenNow.

"My father — like any other American father — was working hard to provide for his family," the letter from Jonathan Bae states.

Last summer, the family received a video of Bae and was

"He had the biggest heart for the people and the nation of North Korea, and he wanted to show tourists from Europe, Canada and the United States a different side to the country than what we typically see in the western media in the hopes of bridging the cultural divide."

Terri Chung

Kenneth Bae's sister

shocked to see that he had lost a significant amount of weight, Johnathan Bates said.

"His time in prison has clearly taken a toll on his health — and this was only two months into his 15-year sentence. The video showed my father working eight hours of physical labor in the fields, plowing and farming six days a week. He has chronic health conditions, including diabetes, heart problems and back pain, which require close monitoring and medical treatment," Bae's son wrote.

"We don't know how quickly his health will deteriorate and how much longer his body can withstand the impact of the labor camp."

In the video, Bae reportedly

asked the U.S. government to help him regain freedom.

North Korea was ranked as the world's top prosecutor of Christians for the 12th consecutive year in a report released Jan. 8 by Open Doors, which seeks to strengthen the persecuted church.

The officially atheist state practices a cult-like worship of the Kim family and continues to imprison from 50,000 - 70,000 followers of Christ in concentration camps, prisons, or prison-like conditions, according to Open Doors.

Possessing a Bible could result in execution or a life sentence in prison.

CNN estimated 200,000 people are kept in a network of prison camps in North Korea,

and the U.S. State Department has placed North Korea on its list of "countries of particular concern" for its violations of religious freedom.

Bae's sister said her brother's health and freedom remain her greatest concerns. "The fact is Kenneth's life is on the line." She urged people to advocate for his immediate release by calling their congressmen, the State Department,

and the White House and by visiting freekennow.com.

In addition to signing the petition for special amnesty, Bae's supporters are asking people to send letters of hope to letterforkennethbae@gmail.com. The letters are compiled and sent to the State Department, and then they are passed to Bae through the Swedish ambassador to North Korea.



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Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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Our Messiah: Abused! • John 18:1-6, 17-24

As we return to our study of John we should remember that the 17th chapter showed us Jesus praying for us and for the eleven as they faced His arrest and execution. In today's lesson from the first of John's 18th chapter we see a detailed historical account of the nasty scene surrounding Jesus' arrest and the Jewish leaders trying to prepare false charges against Him so the Romans will cooperate with their plot.

■ First, Jesus and the eleven disciples went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

■ Jesus voluntarily takes the initiative to meet the Roman Soldiers, Temple Police, and Pharisees and identify Himself as Jesus the Nazarene whom they were seeking.

■ John tell us when Jesus identified Himself by saying "I am He" these seasoned Roman Soldiers, tough Temple Guards and arrogant Pharisees, though fully armed and out numbering Jesus and His followers stepped back and fell to the ground.

■ Simon Peter fearlessly drew his sword and began an aggressive attack on the mob that had come to arrest Jesus.

■ Jesus immediately tells Peter to put his sword away, allow Him to carry out God's will, and heals Malchus' ear that Peter had cut off. (Luke 22:15 is where we find the account of

Jesus healing the ear of the High Priest's slave.)

■ Jesus is taken by the mob to Annas, the former High Priest.

■ John takes Peter into the High Priest's courtyard and Peter tells the servant girl, who is the gatekeeper, that he was not one of Jesus' disciples. (The first denial.)

■ Next Peter moves to stand near the charcoal fire to keep warm. Those

standing there ask him a second time if he was one of Jesus' disciples and Peter denied that he was.

■ Malchus' relative then asks Peter for the third time - Weren't you in the garden? And Peter lies a third time saying he was not in the garden. Then the cock crowed as Jesus had said would happen.

■ Annas then sends Jesus to Caiaphas, his son-in-law who is serving as High Priest at the time, for Caiaphas to rubber stamp the illegal night trial so it can be sent to the Roman governor who had the power to execute Him.



Explore the Bible

with Don Hicks

John wants the readers of his Gospel to understand throughout his account that Jesus was in charge and is going to voluntarily "drink this cup the Father has given Me," John 18:11 (HCSB). See also Luke 22:39-42. This is clearly shown by John's account: "Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, went out and said to them, 'Who is it you're looking for?'" John 18:4 (HCSB). Three times

in verses 5 through 8 Jesus told the mob who came armed carrying lights on a bright night with a full moon that

He was the one they were looking for. The second time He told them in verse 6, His divine nature and strength came though so strongly that Jesus had to wait for them to pick themselves up off the ground and partially regain their composure. Then in John 18:8 Jesus said strongly: "I told you I am [He]" (HCSB).

John continued this important emphasis on Jesus being totally in charge all the way through the crucifixion in

chapter 19 which includes this important teaching: "After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, 'I'm thirsty!' ... When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' He gave up His spirit," John 19:28-30 (HCSB). Jesus, human life on this earth was not over until Jesus said, "It is finished" and "He gave up His spirit."

There is a secondary theme through the passage we are studying today. It concerns Peter who had said earlier in the evening, "I ... why can't I follow you now? ... will lay down my life for You!" John 13:37 (HCSB). While it is certain that Peter did not understand what he was saying he should be given credit for meaning what he said. Surrounded by a large number of heavily armed Roman Soldiers and determined, armed Temple Police, Peter drew his sword and began to fight to protect his Lord. And it was only a direct command from Jesus that stopped him. As you study Peter's life after the 3 denials, his understanding and faith grew and Jesus restored him. In Acts 2, Peter preached with the same determination on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 were saved.

Hicks is a member of Brandon Church, Brandon.

How Can I Be Sure God Exists? • Psalm 19:1-14

God spoke and David heard. As he tended his father's sheep in the hill country around Bethlehem, he listened as the heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament showed forth His handwork. David listened to the wordless message and knew that the One who created such majesty had to be a God who could do anything and knew everything and was everywhere. Day by day and night by night God was speaking through His creation to all people in all places, revealing His existence, power, love and care. David declared that there was no place where the sound (or line) of God's creation had not been heard.

What beautiful word pictures David painted for us in describing the heavens. He pictured the nighttime sky as a tabernacle or tent for the sun and that each morning the sun came out of his tent like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber or like a strong man eager to run a race, and he noted how each day the sun followed the circuit God ordained for it, and that nothing could escape its heat.

"David abruptly shifted from praising the God who reveals Himself in creation to praising the same God for revealing Himself in His Word. It is as if David said, 'Creation tells us much

about God, but His Word tells us much more'" (David Guzik). In verses 6-9 he depicts the Word of God as:

The Law of the Lord - David said that the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The word converting here means repairing, refreshing and restoring—the same word that is used in Psalm 23:3. Obeying God's Word brings our souls refreshing.

The Testimony of the Lord -

David said that the testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple. We all should seek for and desire the wisdom of God. It's available to us through His Word. No matter how little or how much education we possess, the testimony of the Lord will make us wise. Colossians 3:16 admonishes us to let the Word of God dwell in us richly in all wisdom.

The Statutes of the Lord - David said the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. "The one who knows the Word of God and the God

of the Word rejoices in this. They find joy; actual pleasure in the truth of God and relationship with God revealed in His Word" (Guzik).

The Commandment of the Lord - David declared that the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Since God is pure and holy, what issues from His mouth is likewise. The psalmist said, "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

The Fear of the Lord - The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. It's not tarnished and its power will never diminish. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

The Judgments of the Lord - The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. Deuteronomy 32:4 declares, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways

are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He" (NKJV).

And the Word of God is precious and valuable beyond measure - more to be desired than much fine gold and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Oh, that we would desire the Word of God with such passion and realize that our attitude toward the Word of God is a reflection of our attitude toward the God of the Word! David prayed, as we should, that God would cleanse Him from secret faults and presumptuous sins. By His Word, we His servants are warned of these things.

"Unless we have a personal relationship with the Lord so that God is our Father and Jesus is our Redeemer, what we see in creation and read in the Bible will not do us much good. The Word in the hand is fine; the Word in the head is better; the Word in the heart is what transforms us and matures us in Christ" (Wiersbie).

May we pray as David, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer!"

Foster is a member of Murphy Creek Church, Louisville.

Bible Studies for Life

with Patsy Foster



ATTENDANCE

cont. from p. 1

them praying for one another, interceding for churches, and worshipping with "all

their might."

Floyd hopes that now that the pastors have returned to their various places of ministry across the country, they'll be attentive to God possibly placing a burden on their

hearts to lead similar gatherings in their own regions and states based on the principles they've learned.

"We need a spiritual movement to arise in every state in our great nation, led by pas-

tors, to move God's people to extraordinary prayer," Floyd wrote on his blog. "God is doing something... We must reach this world for Christ. The hour is critical. The time is short. This is why we

need to practice extraordinary prayer."

The gathering has a website, praying-pastors.com, and a Twitter hashtag, #prayingpastors.

Just for the Record



The BYW of **CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, had their Christmas party at Kristi Watts, bringing finger foods and a Christmas ornament to swap. Hal Hatten, pastor.

In other Church News:

► **High Hill Church, Raleigh**, is hosting a Youth Extravaganza, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 6:30 p.m.; Josh Smith, speaker; Hardy Street Church Praise Band; finger foods.

► Students from **Flowood Church, Rankin County**, attended Xtreme Winter Conference, Gatlinburg, Tenn., during winter school break.

► **Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa**, will host the Gold City Quartet Feb. 7. Doors open at 6 p.m.; concert at 7. For ticket information, call (228) 219-5759.

► Kevin Crozier, minister of youth and young adults at **Foxworth Church, Foxworth**, has published his first Christian novel entitled Reapers: The Preston Project. It is available at www.amazon.com in hardback, paperback, and in e-book on Kindle.



The Children in Action of **PINE HILL CHURCH, ENTERPRISE**, visited Lakeside Nursing Center in Quitman. They took cards, candy, blankets, and slippers to the residents and sang Christmas carols.



The Majesty of Christmas was held at **FIRST CHURCH, HICKORY FLAT** on December 15th. The First Church Sanctuary Choir, The First Church Little Lambs, and The Hickory Flat High School Choir were featured during the program. The program was under the direction of Duncan Schafer, worship leader at First Church and Tina Baker, Music Teacher at Hickory Flat Attendance Center.

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